6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

'Was she a gypsy ora?' For, as you know, there 776
are two kinds of ora, and if she were a gypsy ora I would have been troubled for my friend. He said, 'No, she was a lady ora.' We spoke no more about it.

"Three years went by, to a day, and again it happened that my friend was sitting alone in his house, making a cup of coffee in the ashes of the fire, when again the door opened."

The man of Ipek stopped speaking, opened his [276] ●
silver tobacco box, and put a pinch of the long, fine, golden tobacco on a cigarette paper. He spread it carefully, twisted it into the cone shape of the Albanian cigarette, glanced at us to see that none of our cigarette holders were empty, and placed the white slender cone between his lips. He lighted it and drew several deliberate puffs. No one spoke. There was the red circle of firelight, the graceful black and white and colored figures huddled close to it, around us the shadows of the house, and beyond them the vast, murmurous blackness of the night and the mountains; the chill and mystery of them seemed to be pressing against the stone walls that kept them out, and the sound of the waterfall was like the sighing breaths of strange, wild things.

"My friend was sitting by his fire, like this, but he was alone. It was the third coming of that day of the year on which the ora had come out of the darkness, and when again the door opened he knew, without turning to see, who it was.

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

Their houses,[1] varied in size and architecture with the wealth of the owners; but all were essentially 342
built for defence. As a rule, they were so situated as to command a good field of fire over their chief approaches, and were often surrounded by walled courtyards entered through heavy, wooden gates studded with iron. For the most part they were of wood and stone, sometimes whitewashed, and consisted of two stories, joined by a narrow indoor staircase, or by a flight of wooden steps on the outside. The ground floor was the cattle and the women's quarters; above was the guest-room. This guest-room was the centre of the life of the house, and, except for a stout chest in which the valuables of the family were stored, was altogether empty of furniture. At one end of it was the open hearth from which the smoke escaped through chinks in the wall or, in statelier mansions, through a chimney. Narrow windows, usually without panes, served as a means of ventilation or, on occasion, as rifle slits; but so dim was the light which they diffused that it was often difficult to read indoors, even at midday. At night the room would be lit by the glow of the fire, or sometimes by oil lamps or pinewood torches.

On entering a house we[2] would take off our boots and give 574
up our rifles to the host, though retaining our side arms. As 576
foreigners, we would then be led to the place of honour, which is on the right-hand side of the hearth, next to the wall. Abas Kupi would sit with us, or take the left-hand side, and the rest of the company, including bodyguards and orderlies, assembled in a horse shoe round the fire. The youngest sat at the apex of the horse shoe, and, since there were often a score of us, the evening would begin with much show of "Friend go up higher". We sat on carpets or sheepskin rugs, cross-legged or reclining against our saddle-bags. When all [276]. were seated, the host rolled cigarettes, which only non-smokers might refuse, and tossed them with unfailing accuracy to each guest. Presently a warm drink would be served, usually coffee, though in the poorer houses sweetened or salted milk was often brought instead. As outlaws we sought to keep our movements secret and our arrival was, as a rule, the first warning of our visit which the host received. Custom demanded that he serve us

[1] [i.e. in the Mati valley -- Analyst]

[2] [British liaison officers in early 1944 -- Analyst]

273 for grape-growing, make a potent red wine, which they resinate in Homeric fashion. Catholics in country fit

The Moslems, prohibited by the Koran from wine drinking, content themselves with distilled liquors. In every neighborhood one or more Moslem families will own a copper still, complete with boiler and cooling screw, which someone once bought in Scutari or another town. Neighbors borrow these stills from time to time, as American families borrow each other's ice-cream freezers. Much of the *raki*, or raisin brandy, so produced, is home distilled, but a certain amount is carried up from the towns. Green *mastica*, a vicious local variety of absinthe, is imported only.
●276 Both Catholics and Moslems smoke. While a few Moslems own *narghilehs*, most tobacco addicts smoke cigarettes. The economics of cigarette smoking is that as a rule each man grows his own tobacco, and sells what he does not consume. He has to buy cigarette paper, imported from France. He has to have some kind of a lighting device, which usually runs to expense, as previously explained (see p. 13). The social aspect of smoking is that it forms a ready means of polite interaction, for men give each other cigarettes, rolling and licking them for an honored guest.

[262] 252 Since the principal food of all the mountaineers, whatever their religion, is bread, usually a tough, unleavened cornbread which will keep for weeks and grow harder and harder instead of molding, one of their principal needs is some way to grind the grain. Most houses contain mortars and pestles, and many also contain hand querns, of Roman design, which the women operate. It is probable, but not certain, that all of the millstones come from the market, since suitable stone is found in few
402 252 areas. A large part of the grain-milling, however, is done in small, water-driven mills, of which there are many. These mills, homemade except for the stones, are operated by vertical-shaft paddle wheels which are in effect primitive turbines. They save the expenditure of human muscular energy, and much time. In one place in Malsia e Jakovës, I saw another kind of mill, a pounding device which consisted of a trough-shaped log set on a pivot, and equipped with a heavy hammer at one end. Water flowed into this trough until enough had entered the lower end to tip the whole,

[See cut 11b p.13b --Analyst]
-17b-

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

the master entered, all rose to their feet and remained standing until he was seated. If he was armed, one of them relieved him of his rifle, hung it on a peg by the door, and turned to see if he wanted to keep his side-arms or to have them hung up beside the rifle. As soon as he settled down he made himself a cup of coffee, rolled and lit a cigarette, and perhaps pulled a small bottle of raw spirit (*raki*) from his pocket. If in a gracious mood, he might make a cup of coffee for the older men and the master designate and let them smoke or even suck at his raki bottle, but if he wished he might lawfully reserve these joys for himself. In any event the younger men might neither drink nor smoke in his presence, though they could do both elsewhere. If he chose to make conversation, the others must follow his lead; if he preferred to remain silent, they could not speak—like good children they must remain seen but not heard. When supper came, no one might put his spoon into the common dish until he had done so. When the time came to leave the room, he led the way as he did when walking through the fields. In the house this indicated his pre-eminence; in the fields it was also a security measure. The others strung out behind him at specified intervals, on the assumption that he could deal himself with a frontal attack but needed to have his back protected by friends.

Given his duties, rights and privileges, the master soon acquired an air of command, whereas his subordinates, condemned for ever to show no initiative, shrank progressively into complete nonentities as their youthful qualities atrophied for want of exercise. But the master must not be tyrannical or unjust, spendthrift or careless of the general weal, and above all he must show no favouritism. If he developed such faults, the other men might lawfully depose him and elect another in his stead. However, the care taken initially in selecting him made such action extremely rare. A good master preferred the spirit to the letter of the law. For example, he rarely sold or bought any family possessions without first consulting his subordinates. And he was always careful not to destroy his subordinates' feeling that the farm and everybody and everything on it belonged to each of them individually as well as collectively, that the welfare of each of them concerned the whole family, and that the general welfare concerned each individual.[1]

[1] Thus a youth who obviously had nothing of his own was yet perfectly in order when he stated that he had just bought a field or even a bride for his brother.